



Seasons Greetings from IWD!



The staff of Iowa Workforce Development hopes you are having a joyous holiday season! Our team will be celebrating, as well.

Be advised that offices will be closed on December 23, 26, and January 2, although our online resources will remain available. Visit www.iowaWORKS.gov for more.

VIDEO: Grants Fund Apprentice Teachers in Storm Lake



Storm Lake is one of 134 Iowa school districts who have taken advantage of state grants to launch Teacher / Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeships, where students work in the classroom while also learning how to teach. [Click the image above to learn more.](#)

Entry-Level Driver Training

Iowa companies have until Friday, February 3 to apply for part of \$6 million the state is setting aside to help increase training opportunities for lowans seeking to obtain a commercial driver's license.

Iowa's Entry-Level Driver Training program is intended to support employers, nonprofits, or related organizations who sponsor or partner on key training programs designed to prepare potential drivers for CDL skills or knowledge tests. The grant program hopes to remove costly barriers and, ultimately, create more drivers with commercial driver's licenses across the state.

For more information, visit [this page](#) or view [this recorded webinar](#).



Language Learners Job Training Program

Iowa employers have until Friday, January 13 to apply for the state's \$5 million Language Learners grant program.

The grant opportunity is designed to help employers provide sustained programs for dual language instruction and increase proficiencies that improve communication with staff, as well as improve overall recruitment and retention.

Awards will support employer programs in English language proficiencies for work-related duties, policies, or procedures, as well as supporting English speakers seeking to learn a second language. Applicants must be employers with at least 25 full-time employees who are either creating or expanding a language program. Language courses are encouraged to be conducted onsite at the place of employment or with consortium members, with a maximum of four hours of paid time during working hours per week (minimum one hour of training per week).

Click [here](#) for more information or to watch this [informational webinar](#).



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Congratulations to 2022 OWDS Class



Twenty-two Iowans are ending 2022 in a much better position to help returning citizens find and stay in meaningful careers.

Iowa Workforce Development this month celebrated 13 people (*top photo above*) as they graduated from 160 hours of training to

become certified **Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS)** – plus, another nine individuals (*smaller photo*) who became certified to train others in OWDS material.

Shelley Seitz, reentry workforce program coordinator for IWD, said the graduation means 22 more Iowans now understand more about the full range of issues faced by individuals who have been involved with the justice system, how to match them with appropriate jobs, and the types of support systems they will need to succeed over time.

IWD has been working for years alongside the Iowa Department of Corrections to provide job training and counseling for soon-to-be-released incarcerated individuals. Special career planners based in prisons help these men and women learn a trade, plan job searches, and work with employers to understand the population's ongoing needs, such as transportation and time off for visits with parole officers.

Advocates for the program note that Iowa releases between 4,000 and 6,000 incarcerated individuals each year after their sentences have been served. So, it's in society's best interest to ensure that these returning citizens are both economically stable and skilled enough to be able to contribute to Iowa's economy.

"We get a lot of feedback from employers that they want to hire from this population, but they don't know how," Seitz said. "This is a great program to get started."

The hope is that OWDS graduates now will go back to their companies and their communities and share the knowledge so that more employers will feel comfortable hiring criminal justice-involved people.

For more information, contact Seitz at Richelle.Seitz@iwd.iowa.gov or 515-725-3891.

When the Weather Outside is Frightful...



Jack Frost need not stand in the way of your job search.

As winter deepens and the roads sometimes turn tricky, Iowa Workforce Development wants to remind you that you need not be on the physical site of an IowaWORKS job center to take full advantage of all the services that IowaWORKS offers.

All IowaWORKS centers have online appointments available for job seekers who are housebound or too concerned about inclement weather to venture out. Any Iowan seeking help with a job search can register for an appointment with a career planner or sign up for workshops on topics such as resume writing, job interviewing, or improving your financial literacy.

For more information, visit [IowaWORKS](#) and review the [calendar of upcoming events](#). Or, simply [contact your local IowaWORKS office](#) and ask for help.

